

# INTERFAITH SUPPORT FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

During Pride Month and Beyond



The majority of faith groups and congregations across the country are inspired by their traditions to celebrate the inherent dignity and worth of all people, including the many beloved LGBTQ+ members of their communities. But an extremist minority is working to distort the meaning of religious freedom to discriminate against those who identify or believe differently than they do.

This Pride Month, we are inviting people from every tradition and background to join together to participate in Faith for Pride: an annual month-long effort to organize and push back against anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, fight anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, and support grassroots organizations that work with LGBTQ+ communities. Our goal is to bring people together to demonstrate that congregations and communities across faith and place vehemently oppose the bills that threaten the lives and livelihoods of our LGBTQ+ friends, family, and neighbors.

Religion has been weaponized throughout our history as a license to harm marginalized individuals and groups. But faith has also moved people to speak out against discrimination and oppression and to fight for the rights of all people.

## Why should faith-based interfaith and spiritual communities support the LGBTQ+ community?

We are called to support members of the LGBTQ+ community because, as people of faith and moral conviction, we acknowledge the sacred dignity of all people. Each of us has the right to exist, the freedom to identify ourselves as we choose, and the responsibility to repair a broken world.

Our sacred texts, leaders, and history teach us to work against systems of oppression and cultures of bigotry while fighting for those who have been most harmed. LGBTQ+ people living among us deserve equal treatment under the law, protection, and the opportunity to thrive as do all people.

## What barriers to building solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community should religious groups be mindful of?



Religion has been weaponized throughout our history as a license to harm marginalized groups. Today, we see a Christian nationalist ideology condoning and codifying discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. For this reason, religious communities—particularly Christian ones—must actively oppose the culture of fear and violence created by the forces of extremism.

**Religious Trauma:** Through personal experiences, public narratives, or legislative actions, LGBTQ+ individuals and communities have and continue to face discrimination and hate-based violence in the name of religion. These experiences can create a negative perception of religion as exclusive and prejudiced. People of faith have an opportunity to stand with and welcome members of the LGBTQ+ community in a spirit of acceptance and love.

**False Advertising:** Well-intentioned communities may invite LGBTQ+ people to enter their sacred spaces to show they are open and accepting. But, those spaces can be marked by proselytization or only exist during specific times, like Pride month. Leaders and communities need to think about the daily needs and challenges of LGBTQ+ people so that efforts to support them are sustained.

**Gaslighting:** The stories and experiences of LGBTQ+ people may not be taken seriously, which leads to a narrative of victim blaming, rather than acknowledging society's lack of accountability to achieve justice and equity. Denying, belittling, or oversimplifying these experiences is an erasure of systemic, cultural, and historic norms that most profoundly impacts LGBTQ+ people who are Black, Indigenous and/or people of color.

**Christian Nationalism:** The coordinated campaign by Christian nationalists to promote one set of religious beliefs and values is the pivotal crisis facing our nation today. With nearly 500 pieces of legislation targeting transgender people, drag performers, access to medical care, and more, it's clear that Christian nationalists are willing to compromise the rights of many to uphold the power of a few. Communities of faith and moral conscience have a moral obligation to speak up and fight back against the assumption that faith is in opposition to LGBTQ+ equality, and we have a responsibility to be loud in our support.

# What best practices would help us to better show up for our queer and transgender siblings?



## Lean in, Listen and Learn.

Being open to learning is central to showing up for the communities you want to uplift. Listen with understanding to the language, experiences, challenges, and opportunities that affect an individual and influence how they navigate the world

## Model the Best Ways to Engage LGBTQ+ People

- Introduce yourself and your pronouns
- Ask for the person's name and pronouns
- Affirm the spectrum of identities that exist and acknowledge the need to do better when you make a mistake
- Affirm that each person's journey around identity is unique, as are their beliefs and opinions
- Do not tokenize LGBTQ+ people or generalize the expression of the identity they hold
- Do not assume that all LGBTQ+ folks are a homogenous group, for example, "Isn't it true that all gay people..." Give the person the authority to answer or not answer a question; let's be careful not to make every LGBTQ+ person an expert on everything that happens in their community – they are only an expert about their own experience
- Uplift community members who model these behaviors and practices

## Show support during Pride Month and beyond.

This Pride Month, in collaboration with our partners, Interfaith Alliance and United Religions Initiative are hosting [Faith for Pride](#): an annual month-long effort to push back against anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, fight anti-LGBTQ+ legislation, and support grassroots organizations that work with LGBTQ+ communities.

We'd love for you to join us by hosting a [Faith for Pride](#) event wherever you call home and raising your voice against anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Let us help you take a stand this month.

Pride may be the month that is most common to celebrate your LGBTQ+ siblings, but learn to celebrate, and fight with and for them every day of the year!

## What if we're already modeling these practices?



### **Continue to refine your engagement through self-reflection.**

- Think about what you can do to create spaces for people to pray, meditate, reflect, or even just talk with others; how are you making sure the LGBTQ+ members of your community feel welcomed and loved?
- How are you helping them explore *all* of who they are, not just the religious/spiritual or gender/sexual identity parts? Listen to who they are as full people and learn what joy and thriving mean to them.
- If you're helping the mind and the heart, how are you also helping the rest? Do they have food, shelter, clothing, internet access, etc.? We are here to build and sustain beloved communities.

### **Learn the difference between being an ally and an activist.**

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### **Re-evaluate your assets and what role they can play.**

Be aware of the assets and privileges that you have as a partner to the communities you're supporting, and think about the resources you can use to give voice to their concerns and necessities. A supportive community is the first step to addressing immediate needs, while long-term sustainability is the goal we're working towards.

### **It's time to get politically involved.**

Our work to make democracy more effective and accountable requires an alliance of communities that hold elected officials accountable for the safety, security, and overall wellness of their constituents.

We cannot do this unless we achieve the groundswell of people required to create positive social change. We are asking people to engage in the political work that helps us strive for peace, justice, and healing, not partisanship, bigotry, vitriol, and violence. We must hold people and communities, even those closest to us, accountable for dehumanizing people from the LGBTQ+ community.

## Modeling Best Practices, Continued.



### **Remember, there is more than one way to show up for the LGBTQ+ community.**

- March in the streets to express our concerns and values in the public square.
- Vote for elected officials who represent the values of pluralism and inclusion.
- Reach out to elected representatives and make your voices heard. This can include providing public comments on legislation being considered at any level, organizing a “call your elected officials” day, scheduling advocacy meetings with legislators, and more.
- Share your resources with people, communities, and organizations that advocate for, protect, and sustain LGBTQ+ people.
- Be alert to hate incidents, legislation, and current events that impact the community.
- Create an emergency response network that can communicate widely and provide immediate support as community members express a need.

### **Join the movement to fight for the rights and safety of LGBTQ+ people.**

Religion has been weaponized throughout our history by the privileged and powerful as a license to harm marginalized groups. But faith has also moved people to speak out against oppression and fight for the rights of all people.

Today, as people of faith, we are called to carry on that legacy. We invite you to join the interfaith movement to join together for LGBTQ+ rights and build safer, more inclusive communities.

This resource was organized and produced by  
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